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Designers on GARDEN SCULPTURE

We asked three experts for their ideas on choosing sculptures for different schemes



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How do you like to use sculpture?

"In larger gardens I use sculpture as 'eye-catchers' in the tradition of 18th-century landscape design. But in smaller contemporary spaces it will often be an integral part of the overall design. I may use it to introduce some colour or movement, depending on the individual piece. I always have the particular sculpture in my mind at a very early stage as I don't believe in adding things afterwards."

"As much as possible and I like to get clients involved in researching and finding the pieces - it connects them more closely to the project."



"In a large garden I like sculpture to be a surprise, to be discovered and visited in a special place in the garden. It shouldn't just be on axis points but as an object that is cherished and revered, giving credence and sometimes humour to a place. In a very small garden I see it as a striking feature that can be lit and focused on so the whole garden hinges on this one piece."

What tips can you offer?

"There are many things to consider when choosing a sculpture,

for example, how it will weather and if



it will deteriorate or change in time. Light and shadow also affect the appearance and night-illumination can transform a piece."

"The most important thing that you should focus on whenever you are placing a sculpture (as with placing anything in the garden) is to make sure you keep it within the right scale and proportion. Not only in scale with the garden as a whole, but also in relationship to the planting schemes and any other hard or soft elements in the layout."

"Look for permanence - materials that are totally weather proofed (some stones don't handle frost or wet). It is a good idea to really understand what you are buying and look carefully at other work the artist makes so that you feel comfortable with his or her quality of work. Visit outdoor sculpture parks to look at their placement and find out how work is displayed."

Whose work do you particularly admire/recommend?

"I have known and admired the work of Henry Moore and Auguste Rodin since I was a child, and contemporary sculptors such as Anish Kapoor really stand out. For more affordable pieces I often use David Undery's work. He makes beautiful wall-mounted pieces using concrete and other materials. For modern figurative work, Helen Sinclair and John Brown work well in garden settings."

"There is a lot of bad sculpture that is aimed specifically at the garden market, so I feel it is important to speak to good galleries for advice. You really do get what you pay for. At Chelsea last year [above] we used work by Bernard Meadows, whose work is abstract and quite visceral. Pangolin (pangolin-editions.com) is one of the biggest galleries with work from a wide range of artists."



"Emily Young, for striking figurative work [left]; Peter Randall-Page for his knowledge of the materials he works with and his observation of nature; Paul Vanstone's figurative stonework is smooth, slender and tactile and his passion for art shines through." ■